

# Making your home a better place to live with dementia



# Who is the guide for?

## This guide is for people with dementia and their carers.

It focuses on the impact of dementia on daily living at home aiming to make life easier so that you can continue to live independently and do the things you want to do.

It is also aimed at informing organisations providing a range of services for older people and points them in the direction of simple, and often low-cost, adaptations that can make a big difference to people's lives, as well as signposting to the organisations that can help.

Separate guides are available for people with other health conditions. These will be helpful for those who may have several long-term conditions.

<https://silverlinksprogramme.wordpress.com/resources-for-older-people/>

By making the home safer to negotiate the lives of carers too can be made significantly easier.

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# How can this guide help you or a family member?

If you or your partner or family member have been diagnosed with dementia there are several things you could do to improve your home environment to enjoy life and live life to the full.

These ideas can be considered whether you stay in your current home or move to specialist or supported housing.

They include considerations about:

- general design and layout to support a good life at home
- lighting and heating
- safety, security and technology
- gadgets and equipment
- going out and about.

There is also a section on moving options should this be an option you want to consider. Where appropriate there is a link to further advice.

## Common symptoms of dementia<sup>1</sup>

The word dementia describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. These changes are often small to start with, but for someone with dementia they have become severe enough to affect daily life. A person with dementia may also experience changes in their mood or behaviour.

### Alzheimer's disease

This is the most common cause of dementia. Brain cells are surrounded by an abnormal protein and their internal structure is also damaged. In time, chemical connections between brain cells are lost and some cells die. Problems with day-to-day memory are often noticed first, but other symptoms may include difficulties with: finding the right words, solving problems, making decisions, or perceiving things in three dimensions.

### Vascular dementia

If the oxygen supply to the brain is reduced because of narrowing or blockage of blood vessels, some brain cells become damaged or die. This causes vascular dementia. The symptoms can occur either suddenly following one large stroke, or over time through a series of small strokes or damage to small blood vessels deep in the brain. The symptoms of vascular dementia vary and may overlap with those

of Alzheimer's disease. Many people have difficulties with problem-solving or planning, thinking quickly and concentrating. They may also have short periods when they get very confused.

### **Mixed dementia**

This is when someone has more than one type of dementia, and a mixture of symptoms. It is common for someone to have Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia together.

### **Dementia with Lewy bodies**

This type of dementia involves tiny abnormal structures (Lewy bodies) developing inside brain cells. They disrupt the brain's chemistry and lead to the death of brain cells. Early symptoms can include fluctuating alertness, difficulties with judging distances and hallucinations. Day-to-day memory is usually affected less than in early Alzheimer's disease. Dementia with Lewy bodies is closely related to Parkinson's disease and often has some of the same symptoms, including difficulty with movement.

### **Frontotemporal dementia** (including Pick's disease)

In frontotemporal dementia, the front and side parts of the brain are damaged over time when clumps of abnormal proteins form inside nerve cells, causing them to die. At first, changes in personality and behaviour may be the most obvious signs. Depending on where the damage is, the person may have difficulties with fluent speech or may forget the meaning of words or objects.

The symptoms of these types of dementia are often different in the early stages but become more similar in the later stages. This is because more of the brain becomes affected as the different diseases progress. In the later stages of dementia, the person will need more support to carry out everyday tasks. However, many people with dementia maintain their independence and live well for years after their diagnosis.

**The Alzheimer's Society – see <http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/> can provide further details about different types of dementia as well as offering help and advice.**

A common concern for people with dementia is that confusion and memory loss will mean they cannot stay safely in their own home. But with the right support and with some simple design and layout changes, many people with dementia can and do enjoy living at home for the rest of their lives.

Our aim is to offer options to minimise impact so that you can live comfortably and well at home. For ease of reference we have identified changes that focus on: -

- general mobility
- helping with navigation, reduced vision, orientation and memory
- help with daily tasks in the home
- keeping warm and safe.

# Financial help with repairs, improvements and adaptations to your home

If you are on a limited income and your condition restricts your movement or makes it difficult or unsafe to move about your home, you may be entitled to some help with repairs, adaptations and equipment in your home.

A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is available from the local council if you are eligible and there may be other housing grants available. DFG pays for essential home adaptations and is mandatory and means tested. The maximum grant is £30,000 with average grants of £6,500. Some councils will have smaller grants for essential repairs or heating but this varies locally so you need to contact your local council to find out what is available.

Disability Rights UK at <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/housing-grants?onOff=OFF>

Age UK at

[http://www.ageuk.org.uk/brandpartnerglobal/gloucestershirevpp/factsheets/housing/funding\\_repairs\\_improvements\\_and\\_adaptations\\_fcs.pdf](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/brandpartnerglobal/gloucestershirevpp/factsheets/housing/funding_repairs_improvements_and_adaptations_fcs.pdf)

and

[http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/FS42\\_Disability\\_equipment\\_and\\_home\\_adaptations\\_fcs.pdf?dtrk=true](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/FS42_Disability_equipment_and_home_adaptations_fcs.pdf?dtrk=true)

Alzheimer's Society at

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1777/factsheet\\_equipment\\_adaptations\\_and\\_improvements\\_to\\_the\\_home.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1777/factsheet_equipment_adaptations_and_improvements_to_the_home.pdf)



## The home and garden

**How safe or otherwise is your home?**

One idea is to check your home room by room, as well as any outside areas, listing features that might be awkward now or that you imagine might be hard in the future if your condition deteriorates. Look for features that make it hard to move around, carry out daily tasks like food preparation, look after yourself (such as washing and dressing), look after the home keeping it clean and tidy and, of paramount importance, enable you to do the things you enjoy most at home. Simple adaptations or changes might make a big difference to you.

# Design and layout

## *General mobility - create the space to move around and prevent falls*

Contrasting colours can help people with dementia continue to find their way around their home and garden and remember what things are meant to be used for. Examples are colour contrast for doors, light switches, sockets, door handles.

Consider signs or pictures to help determine rooms like the bathroom and kitchen.

A bed made up with linen in a clearly contrasting colour from the rest of the room makes it easier to see where the bed is and can be a reminder about what it is for.

Another example is in the bathroom, using contrasting colours for toilet seats and coloured handrails can both help to use the bathroom safely and hygienically. Something as simple as using a bar of soap that is a contrasting colour to the basin or bath can make washing easier.

Using blocks of plain colour rather than patterns also helps make the distinction clearer.

Floor coverings are important when it comes to moving around the home as they can be a 'way-finding' feature helping to trigger memory. Patterned floor coverings can cause confusion e.g. lines in patterned carpets might be perceived as changes of level or steps. Glossy finishes on floors can also create confusing reflections, so plain matt finishes might be preferable.

The University of Stirling runs the Dementia Services Development Centre - See <http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/> which focuses on practical design solutions for people with dementia and their carers. It has produced a wide range of reports including a book (available to buy commercially) called 10 Helpful hints for dementia design at home. There is also a helpful guide on dementia and sight loss at [http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good\\_practice\\_in\\_the\\_design\\_of\\_homes\\_and\\_living\\_spaces\\_for\\_people\\_living\\_with\\_dementia\\_and\\_sight\\_loss\\_final.pdf](http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good_practice_in_the_design_of_homes_and_living_spaces_for_people_living_with_dementia_and_sight_loss_final.pdf)

Making your Home Dementia Friendly Alzheimer's Society  
[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/2796/making\\_your\\_home\\_dementia\\_friendly.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/2796/making_your_home_dementia_friendly.pdf)

## **Help with navigation, orientation and memory**

Arranging the furniture to make it easier to move round the room, creating clear and obvious 'passages' for getting from one side of the room to the other can all help to make movement safer.

Placing chairs so that you can look out of the window, or watch people who are doing things inside and outside the home, can help to maintain social and sensory stimulation.

Laying out rooms with clearly visible memorabilia and objects which act as memory stimulants has also been shown to be beneficial.

Making your home as 'open plan' as possible, enabling visibility from one room to another, even something as radical as removing doors, can help you to navigate your way around. A group of closed, identical doors, e.g. in a hallway, can sometimes cause distress and disorientation.

## **Help with daily tasks in the home**

Make sure things are easy to see instead of having to remember where they are. Ideas include fitting glass-fronted doors to kitchen and bedroom cupboards, installing ovens and fridges with clear doors, and keeping food in see-through containers.

Keep surfaces (such as in the kitchen or on tables) as clear as possible, with just the essentials on display. For example, in the kitchen put away the rack of herbs and spices which are used only infrequently, and leave out the kettle, tea, coffee and sugar, a couple of mugs and teaspoons.

The University of Stirling's guide for people with dementia and sight loss is helpful here. See

[http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good\\_practice\\_in\\_the\\_design\\_of\\_homes\\_and\\_living\\_spaces\\_for\\_people\\_living\\_with\\_dementia\\_and\\_sight\\_loss\\_final.pdf](http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good_practice_in_the_design_of_homes_and_living_spaces_for_people_living_with_dementia_and_sight_loss_final.pdf)





## Quick checklist: **Design and layout**

Tick box

**Use contrasting colours especially in bedroom, bathroom and kitchen to highlight function**

**Use plain, non-shiny, non-slip flooring**

**Move furniture so it is easier to move around the home.**

**Place seating to enable watching activity inside and outside the home**

**Open the layout of the home as much as possible**

**Place objects in sight lines to stimulate memory**

**Install glass fronted cupboards and appliances**

**Use open storage and see through containers**

**Keep main work surfaces clear of everything but essentials**



## **Lighting and heating**

### ***General mobility – create the space to move around and prevent falls***

Maximising natural light is not only beneficial for seeing in general, but also gives important information about the time of day.

Poor lighting can increase the incidence of hallucinations - especially if this creates lots of shadows. It is important to be able to control natural and electric lighting to prevent sharp variations in lighting levels, avoiding excessive brightness and shadowed areas. Blinds can be useful for diffusing strong daylight, whilst for night time a simple bright central light source with carefully directed task lights (making sure that these don't shine in your face or create light pools) are best.

### ***Compensate for reduced vision and improve navigation and safety***

You can use timers to make sure that lamps come on in the evenings. There are also some seats and chairs that come fitted with pressure pads that turn lights on and off as someone gets up or sits down. Lights triggered by movement sensors can be fitted so that they switch on when a person gets out of bed or enters a room.

A low-tech solution is to use nightlights in the hall and on the landing, and leave a light on in the bathroom or toilet overnight. There are some units you can plug into an ordinary socket that will come on when you walk past ('motion-sensitive')

Thomas Pocklington Trust provides useful advice about good lighting for people with sight loss at <http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/project/practical-guide-improving-lighting-existing-homes/>

University of Stirling Dementia Services Development Centre's guide on dementia and sight loss is also helpful at [http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good\\_practice\\_in\\_the\\_design\\_of\\_homes\\_and\\_living\\_spaces\\_for\\_people\\_living\\_with\\_dementia\\_and\\_sight\\_loss\\_final.pdf](http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good_practice_in_the_design_of_homes_and_living_spaces_for_people_living_with_dementia_and_sight_loss_final.pdf)

## Keeping warm

A home which is warm and dry especially in colder weather is critical for people with all long-term health conditions. Maintain a higher background level of warmth throughout all the parts of the home that you use daily if you can to prevent major fluctuations in temperature. Moving out of a warm, well heated living room into a cold hall, kitchen or bedroom can be particularly risky for people with long term conditions.

Make sure your home is well insulated and draught proofed. Good ventilation is required if solid fuel fires are used. Check if there is any damp or condensation.

As dementia progresses, there may be concerns about maintaining judgement about whether the home is too hot or too cold, as well as the potential fire hazards linked to some direct heating systems (i.e. gas, electric or solid fuel fires). Some simpler preparatory measures worth considering include installation of central heating with programmable controls to ensure that the system automatically comes on if temperatures fall below a specified level (rather than just a timed system).

Isolation valves can be fitted to gas fires and gas cookers, which mean the fire or cooker can only be turned on by a carer or someone who is there to supervise their safe use. Timers and thermostats to control the temperature of hot water are also important to avoid the risk of scalding.

Further guidance from Winter Wrapped up from Age UK  
[http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Information-guides/AgeUKIG27\\_Winter\\_wrapped\\_up\\_inf.pdf?dtrk=true](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Information-guides/AgeUKIG27_Winter_wrapped_up_inf.pdf?dtrk=true)

Living Safely and Well at Home from Care and Repair England  
<http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Revised-LIVING-SAFELY-Lft.pdf>

For advice on damp, condensation and insulation options contact your local Home Improvement Agency. See Organisations that can help on Page 16. The Energy Savings Trust offers advice on energy efficiency  
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

The Alzheimer's Society provide support and advice on daily living at home including washing and bathing, dressing, eating and drinking  
<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20029/dailyliving>



## Quick checklist: **Lighting and heating**

Tick box

**Let as much natural daylight in as possible whilst controlling potential glare with blinds**

**Make sure electric lighting is bright whilst avoiding shadows and light pools**

**Use timers, nightlights, or motion-sensitive lights**

**Maintain a higher background level of warmth throughout all the parts of the home**

**Fit fireguards to fires and easy to use to controls**

**Deal with damp or condensation by seeking advice**

**Ensure chimneys are swept regularly and check the flue regularly**

**Use heating timers and thermostats**

**Fit thermostats to control water temperature**

**Consider isolation valves for gas fires and cookers**



## **Safety, security and technology**

### ***General mobility – create the space to move around and prevent falls***

Falls can be a hazard as you get older. Simple measures such as keeping rooms free of general clutter on the floors, removing loose rugs or frayed carpets and having good lighting can help reduce risk of falls.

Many falls happen on steps and stairs. Fitting a second handrail on the stairs, putting up grab rails by steps and clearly marking the edges of steps and stairs are just some of the measures worth taking sooner rather than later.

Bathrooms are another major falls and accident risk area. Grab rails and a toilet seat riser can help with being unsteady when going from sitting to standing. No longer being able to use a bath safely is one of the main reasons that older people seek help with adapting their home. Installing a level access shower or wet room as soon as possible to learn to use this equipment can both enable you to look after yourself for longer, as well as making it easier for carers later on.

Occupational therapists (OTs) are the main professionals to advise and you could also try your local Home Improvement Agency if you have one. Contact Foundations at <http://www.findmyhia.org.uk/>

If it takes time for an OT to visit, try the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) for information on the options to consider at <http://www.dlf.org.uk/>

## ***Compensate for reduced vision and improve navigation and safety***

To provide a safe home better lighting, as well the installation of low maintenance or mains operated smoke alarms and carbon monoxide indicators benefit everyone.

There is a growing range of equipment or Assistive Technology (AT) that can make independent day to day living easier by providing help to enable washing, dressing, cooking, eating and other daily activities or to offer greater security by the provision of an alarm system with links to people outside the home that can offer help in an emergency. There are also many developing technologies that help people to live their lives to the full at home offering help with communication, creativity and daily activities.

There is an increasing range of devices that use a variety of sensors fitted around the home to monitor activity by the occupant or changes in 'normal' activity. The sensors are often linked via a telephone line to a nominated person or a call centre. By monitoring the person's activities, the system can detect potential problems and trigger an alarm to a relative, carer, neighbour or emergency services.

Technology is changing rapidly with more devices available for communications and support and a rapidly changing landscape. Where appropriate we have offered a link to guides and organisations that can help .

Consider if an alarm system, telecare and assistive technology options might help you with daily living and offer you some reassurance at home.

- Alarm systems are activated by the person and are linked to a centre or nominated person.
- Telecare systems generally have sensors that monitor activities and alert a call centre or nominated person in response to lack of activity. Sensors might cover such areas as bed occupancy, flush use, fridge opening which assess if the person is mobile. Other sensors might include flood and extreme temperatures, gas sensors and also falls sensors detecting if a person falls.
- Assistive technology and equipment covers a range of products and equipment that help make independent living easier such as help with washing, dressing, cooking and eating as well as other daily activities.

- Help for people with dementia can also include prompts and reminders, clocks and calendars, communication aids such as adapted telephones, location devices and automatic shut off devices (gas supply and water) all aimed at enabling people to retain their independence at home.
- Safety and security may also be enhanced by a key safe or, a costlier option, a door entry system. Key safes can sometimes be provided by the local council if you install an alarm. The key is put outside in the safe and accessed by a code. Door entry systems can enable visitors to open the door without the host having to get up.

In some areas, a home safety and security check is offered – contact your local Home Improvement Agency or local Age UK

Information on alarms and telecare is available from NHS Choices at <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/telecare-alarms.aspx>

and from the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) at Ask Sara <http://www.dlf.org.uk/content/asksara>

Guides on technology include

- Assistive and inclusive home technology guide from Thomas Pocklington Trust [http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/AIT-Guide\\_Accessible.pdf](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/AIT-Guide_Accessible.pdf)
- Independent Age guide to Assistive technology <https://www.independentage.org/sites/default/files/2016-12/Factsheet-Technology-to-help-you-at-home-larger-text-version.pdf>
- Using technology the Macular Society [https://www.macularsociety.org/sites/default/files/downloads/access%20Using%20Technology%20MS011%200615\\_2.pdf](https://www.macularsociety.org/sites/default/files/downloads/access%20Using%20Technology%20MS011%200615_2.pdf)  
There is also a listening version at <https://www.macularsociety.org/resource/using-technology-0>
- Assistive Technology Fact Sheet - Devices to help with everyday living Alzheimer's Society [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1779/factsheet\\_assistive\\_technology\\_%E2%80%93\\_devices\\_to\\_help\\_with\\_everyday\\_living.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1779/factsheet_assistive_technology_%E2%80%93_devices_to_help_with_everyday_living.pdf)
- Living with Dementia Keeping safe at home Alzheimer's Society [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/732/living\\_with\\_dementia\\_-\\_keeping\\_safe\\_at\\_home.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/732/living_with_dementia_-_keeping_safe_at_home.pdf)
- At Dementia – a website providing information on assistive technology to help people live independently <https://www.atdementia.org.uk/>

## Quick checklist: **Safety, security and technology**

Tick box

- Keep floors clear of clutter and cables tidy**
- Remove loose rugs and frayed carpets**
- Ensure good lighting, especially over steps and stairs**
- Fix handrails and grab rails, especially on steps, stairs and in bathrooms**
- Mark the edges of steps and stairs**
- Consider a toilet riser and grab rails in the bathroom**
- Fit low maintenance or mains connected smoke alarms and carbon monoxide indicators**
- Find out about special equipment and adaptations**
- Consider if alarm systems, telecare and assistive technology options might help with daily living**
- Fit a key safe or door entry system**
- Consider installing a level access shower/wetroom**
- Consider if sensors might help to monitor activities in the home**
- Look at solutions that help to maintain your independence and quality of life such as prompts, reminders, location devices and adapted phones**



## Retro decorating

This is a simple way of helping people with dementia feel more comfortable in their home surroundings which may help to maintain independence and capacity for longer than might otherwise be the case.

With dementia, short term memory may become poor, but longer-term memories can remain strong. Someone with dementia may start to feel more comfortable with items that were familiar to them earlier in their lives. Instead of just reminiscing over these things, retro-decorating involves putting familiar items back in the home – and using them. Going back to using what was once familiar seems to be helping people to remain at home for longer, and feel happier and more confident about doing so.

For example, a modern sofa might be replaced with an older style three-piece suite, or a cordless or mobile phone replaced by a telephone that has push buttons or a dial. Using these items can also help to remind people what to do with them – so using the sort of telephone you had years ago, may be enough of a trigger to mean you carry on making calls. If in earlier days you or someone else with dementia used to cook whilst listening to the radio, replacing the current model with an older style-looking radio in the kitchen can help that person recall making meals and start successfully cooking simple dishes again. Listening to the type of music you remember best can help trigger all sorts of memories about what to do as well as being enjoyable.

Looking through someone's old photographs and seeing what catches their attention and brings back clear memories are good ways of identifying what might be 'familiar' to that person. If you knew the person many years ago – because you were already married to them, perhaps – you may remember many things they did using particular items. It is important to focus on what was familiar to that person, and not to make assumptions: otherwise you may end up with a redecorated 1970s-style lounge when what triggers the clearest recollection is the coffee table they had in the 1950s.

In terms of buying or replacing things, the current interest in 'vintage' and recycling does mean there are many companies and shops selling reproduction items as well as originals, car boot sales, or web sites such as eBay <https://www.ebay.co.uk/> or Freecycle <https://www.freecycle.org/> may also be good sources to try.

For ideas online try Pinterest. <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/explore/retro-decorating/>

## Quick checklist: **Retro decorating**

Tick box

**Find out what household items trigger memories**

**Replace everyday items with more familiar older-styles versions**

**Use all the senses - think about taste and smell, as well as shape, colour and size of objects**



## Gadgets and equipment

### *What is available and appropriate for you*

There is an increasing range of gadgets and equipment available to enable people to remain independent at home. For detailed information, you can use Disabled Living Foundation's website – Ask Sara <http://www.dlf.org.uk/content/asksara> which has a great deal of information about what is available across a range of activities at home and includes details of suppliers. Some of the areas covered include products that will support you in using the bathroom, kitchen and bedroom, stairs and garden and home entrance.

For information on daily living products contact Ask Sara <http://www.dlf.org.uk/content/asksara> or for specific help for people with dementia try the Alzheimer's Society [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20029/daily\\_living](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20029/daily_living) and [https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20030/staying\\_independent/30/assistive\\_technology](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20030/staying_independent/30/assistive_technology) and product information from At Dementia <https://www.atdementia.org.uk/>



### *Centres to try*

In some areas of the country there are Disabled Living Centres and Centres for Independent Living where you can try equipment and products. Contact your local council to find out if you have one in your area.



## Getting out and about

Think about access to and from your home and in the garden so consider ramps where feasible. An Occupational therapist and Home Improvement Agency can advise.

If you have or are likely to need a mobility scooter, then a storage space with access to an electric supply to recharge will be key. Remember it is important too to be assessed before you choose one. Use an independent living centre/disabled living centre or occupational therapist.

If you, or your friends and carers, need help with transport with a car then car parking will be important to you and specifically those available for disabled drivers if you become entitled to a blue badge.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge>

Sensors can also be used to tell if the front door has been left open. There are devices that activate a reminder message whenever you enter or leave your home. The message (which can be personally recorded, so it can be the voice of someone you know) can be used to remind you to pick up your keys or lock the front door. Or the message might tell you not to go out at night, or remind you about appointments. Try the Alzheimer's Society for help with assistive technologies like sensors

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20030/staying\\_independent/30/assistive\\_technology?gclid=CJfXrJvGt9ICFVG6GwodWfEL1g](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20030/staying_independent/30/assistive_technology?gclid=CJfXrJvGt9ICFVG6GwodWfEL1g)

A key safe can be very useful if you go out and find you haven't taken a key if someone nearby has the security code (perhaps a trusted neighbour).

If becoming lost is a major worry, some people choose to carry a card with them that gives basic details of their name and the name and telephone number of someone who could be contacted if, for example, they became disorientated or confused whilst out. Or some people wear a wristband which contains similar information.

Other people opt to use a tracking device. Tracking devices use satellite technology to help trace someone if they were expected home but appear to have gone missing. Your location can be viewed on a computer or a mobile phone. Most of the devices have a panic button you can use if you get lost whilst out. Or some people use a mobile phone that has location finder technology built in instead. See the Alzheimer's Society for ideas

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20030/staying\\_independent/30/assistive\\_technology?gclid=CJfXrJvGt9ICFVG6GwodWfEL1g](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20030/staying_independent/30/assistive_technology?gclid=CJfXrJvGt9ICFVG6GwodWfEL1g) Alzheimer's Society.

# Thinking about moving home

You may decide that having thought about the suitability of your current home, particularly if it is located somewhere that might make going out independently more difficult, moving might be a better option.

It is worth bearing in mind that many of the issues described above about living at home also apply to other housing options - such as the design and layout. Because a property has been built for older people does not automatically make it well suited for a person with dementia.

Your main housing options if you decide to move home include:

- A more suitable and better located 'ordinary' property (i.e. not one which has been built specially for older people) such as a bungalow or a flat that you might buy or rent.
- Special housing built for older people, such as retirement or sheltered housing. In some, but not all, of these types of accommodation help may be at hand if you need it. Some will be designed to make them easier for older people with health problems manage, such as having space for adaptations and equipment and with no steps or stairs.
- Specialist housing with 24-hour on-site care, such as extra care housing or an 'assisted living' apartment. These may be available to buy or to rent. There are also some specialist housing developments for people with specific conditions such as dementia.
- A care or nursing home.

Information about the pros, cons, costs and local availability of these housing options is available from the national, independent information and advice service FirstStop Housing and Care Advice.

Their website at <http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/> lists in detail local specialist housing developments (both for sale and rent) as well as related services. They produce brochures about housing and care options including for people with dementia and offer a free telephone helpline 0800 377 7070.

Wherever you choose to live, you might need help with day to day living, such as washing, dressing, cleaning and so on. FirstStop, as well as some of the organisations listed below, can offer information about how to find and pay for the care you need.

# Organisations that can help

These organisations have been mentioned in the text offering advice and support for independent living

**Age UK** – <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

Tel: 0800 678 1174

**Alzheimer's Society** – <http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

Tel: 0300 222 11 22

**At Dementia** – <https://www.atdementia.org.uk/>

Tel: 0115 74 84220

**Disability Rights UK** – <http://disabilityrightsuk.org/>

- General Enquiries: 020 7250 8181

- Personal Budgets Helpline: 0300 555 1525

The Equality Advisory Support Service helpline: 0808 800 0082

**Disabled Living Foundation** – <http://www.dlf.org.uk/>

Tel: 0300 999 0004

**First Stop** – Information about the pros, cons, costs and local availability of housing and care options is available.

[www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk](http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk)

Tel: 0800 377 7070

**Independent Age** – <https://www.independentage.org/>

Tel: 0800 319 6789

**Home Improvement Agencies** via **Foundations** their national body –

<http://www.foundations.uk.com/>

Tel: 0300 124 0315

**Macular Society**

<https://www.macularsociety.org/?gclid=COC89-Swg9ICFc6T7Qod-plNBg>

Tel: 0300 3030 111

**NHS Choices** – <http://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

**Occupational Therapists** work with people to enable them to achieve health, wellbeing and life satisfaction through participation in activities that mean something to them, retaining independence

Occupational therapy services are available free of charge from the NHS and social services so contact social services in the first instance. If it takes time for an OT to visit, try the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) <http://www.dlf.org.uk/> for information on the options to consider.

Independent occupational therapists usually provide services that are not available from the NHS or social services and/or have no waiting lists. You can find a properly trained and registered OT via the College of Occupational Therapists <https://www.cotss-ip.org.uk/find#!location=SE5+9AW&service=0>. You can also call the Professional Practice Enquiries Service at the Royal College of Occupational Therapists 020 7450 2330

**Silverlinks** run by Care & Repair England is about creating networks of mutual support to enable older people to make informed decisions about their housing and related care. It provides useful information about housing and care options including a 'teach yourself' booklet <https://silverlinksprogramme.wordpress.com/>

Tel: 0115 950 6500

**Thomas Pocklington Trust** – <http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/>

Tel: 020 8995 0880

## Useful guides

These guides offer advice and support for independent living

### **Alarms and technology**

Alarms and telecare NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/telecare-alarms.aspx>

Assistive and inclusive home technology guide Thomas Pocklington Trust

[http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/AIT-Guide\\_Accessible.pdf](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/AIT-Guide_Accessible.pdf)

Assistive Technology Guide Independent Age

<https://www.independentage.org/sites/default/files/2016-12/Factsheet-Technology-to-help-you-at-home-larger-text-version.pdf>

Using technology Macular Society

[https://www.macularsociety.org/sites/default/files/downloads/access%20Using%20Technology%20MS011%200615\\_2.pdf](https://www.macularsociety.org/sites/default/files/downloads/access%20Using%20Technology%20MS011%200615_2.pdf)

### **Dementia**

Making your Home Dementia Friendly Alzheimer's Society

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/2796/making\\_your\\_home\\_dementia\\_friendly.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/2796/making_your_home_dementia_friendly.pdf)

Assistive Technology Fact Sheet - Devices to help with everyday living  
Alzheimer's Society

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1779/factsheet\\_assistive\\_technology\\_%E2%80%93\\_devices\\_to\\_help\\_with\\_everyday\\_living.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/1779/factsheet_assistive_technology_%E2%80%93_devices_to_help_with_everyday_living.pdf)

Living with Dementia Keeping safe at home Alzheimer's Society

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/732/living\\_with\\_dementia\\_-\\_keeping\\_safe\\_at\\_home.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/732/living_with_dementia_-_keeping_safe_at_home.pdf)

At Dementia – a website providing information on assistive technology to help people live independently <https://www.atdementia.org.uk/>

## General

A practical guide to healthy ageing Age UK/NHS England

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/hlthy-ageing-brochr.pdf>

Living Safely and Well at Home from Care& Repair England

<http://careandrepair-england.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Revised-LIVING-SAFELY-Lft.pdf>

Thinking Ahead: Housing, Care and Related Finance in Later Life from Silverlinks

<https://silverlinksprogramme.wordpress.com/resources-for-older-people/>

Winter wrapped up from Age UK

[http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Information-guides/AgeUKIG27\\_Winter\\_wrapped\\_up\\_inf.pdf?dtrk=true](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Information-guides/AgeUKIG27_Winter_wrapped_up_inf.pdf?dtrk=true)

Daily Living Skills Macular Society

<https://www.macularsociety.org/sites/default/files/resource/Macular%20Society%20Daily%20Living%20Skills%20accessible%20pdf%20MS004%200617.pdf>

listening version

<https://www.macularsociety.org/sites/default/files/downloads/Daily%20Living%20Skills%20CD.mp3>

## Sight Loss

A Practical Guide to Improving Lighting in Existing Homes

Thomas Pocklington Trust <http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/project/practical-guide-improving-lighting-existing-homes>

Information for everyday living home and leisure <http://www.rnib.org.uk/>

Dementia and sight loss University of Stirling

[http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good\\_practice\\_in\\_the\\_design\\_of\\_homes\\_and\\_living\\_spaces\\_for\\_people\\_living\\_with\\_dementia\\_and\\_sight\\_loss\\_final.pdf](http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/system/files/filedepot/12/good_practice_in_the_design_of_homes_and_living_spaces_for_people_living_with_dementia_and_sight_loss_final.pdf)

Dementia and Sight Loss RNIB/Alzheimer' Scotland

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/Sight%20loss%20and%20dementia%20leaflet.pdf>

This guide has been produced with help from the Older People's Housing Champions network and The Elders Council of Newcastle Reader's Group.



**The Older People's Housing Champions** is a network of older activists who support action by older people's groups to improve housing and related services for an ageing population across England.

[www.housingactionblog.wordpress.com](http://www.housingactionblog.wordpress.com)



**The Elders Council of Newcastle** is a group of people who are committed to having a say about how to make Newcastle a great city in which to grow old. We do this in a variety of ways - peer research, arts projects, focus groups and regular meetings with service providers and policymakers.

[www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk)



**Care & Repair England** is an independent charitable organisation which aims to improve older people's housing. It is a Registered Society with Charitable Status Reg No 25121R.

Head Office: The Renewal Trust Business Centre,  
3 Hawksworth Street, Nottingham NG3 2EG

[www.careandrepair-england.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair-england.org.uk) Twitter @cr\_england



**Silverlinks** is about creating networks of mutual support to enable older people to make informed decisions about their housing & related care.

<https://silverlinksprogramme.wordpress.com/> Twitter @\_Silverlinks



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